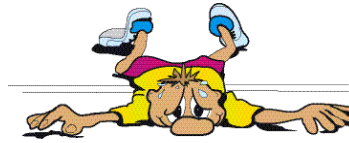




Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS)

by Nicole Sanford

WHAT IS FIBROMYALGIA?



Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS) is a common, painful, chronic condition

that is characterized primarily by widespread muscular pain and fatigue throughout the body. This disorder seems to arise in the muscles and tendons. The discomfort can be so severe that it limits sufferers in their ability to lead a full life. Typically the pain is an achy and/or stiff feeling that occurs bilaterally. The symptoms are characteristically more intense in the morning.

Fibromyalgia appears to include a biochemical alteration in pain perception. This condition seems to appear after a physical or emotional trauma or an infection. It is not life threatening and it does not cause permanent damage. However, there is no cure although there are ways in which the pain and other contributing symptoms may be managed. This condition targets women of childbearing age, although it is also seen in men, children, and the elderly.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS FOR FIBROMYALGIA?

There are many conditions that are associated with FMS and may accompany the pain. Some of these include myofascial pain syndrome, irritable bowel syndromes, chronic fatigue syndrome, and Raynaud's phenomenon (hands turn white and cold). These conditions need to be diagnosed and treated appropriately. In addition to the discomfort, FMS sufferers may experience a decrease in their energy level, a distur-

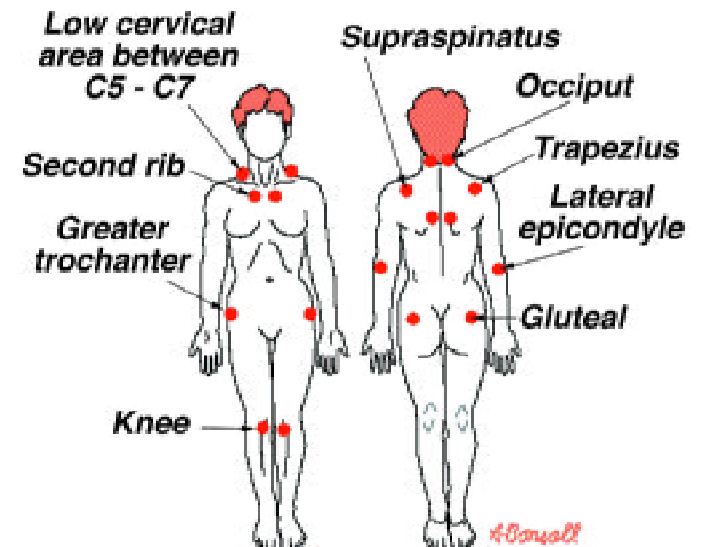
bance of sleep, severe headaches and often depression and anxiety related to their changing levels of pain.

HOW IS FIBROMYALGIA DIAGNOSED?

There is no way to diagnose Fibromyalgia through blood test, x-rays or other diagnostic tests. However, there is an approved criterion to be met in order for a diagnosis of Fibromyalgia to be made:

- The individual needs to have a 3-month history of bilateral pain.
- The individual should have tenderness in at least 11 of the 18 specified tender points
- Some of those areas may not be painful for a person plagued with Fibromyalgia, but pain may surface with palpation during evaluation.

Sites of Fibromyalgia tender points:



Tender Points of Fibromyalgia

HOW CAN FIBROMYALGIA BE TREATED?

Treatment focus:

- Alleviate symptoms of pain and sleeplessness
- Break the pain cycle and reverse its direction

This can be done through basic practices of good health and well being. An individual with FMS needs to begin by gaining a good understanding of their condition and how their body responds to the condition. Treatments for Fibromyalgia often includes education and instruction in nutrition, stress reduction, and breathing and postural reeducation. However, the key to Fibromyalgia sufferers improving the way they feel by (1) working to overcome any sleeping disabilities they may have, and (2) exercise. Exercise is a significant part in the treatment. When beginning a program the individual must start out gradually because exercise for a person with FMS maybe very painful if not done properly.



Benefits of exercise for Fibromyalgia sufferers:

- Produces natural painkillers
- Increases strength and endurance
- Increases overall fitness and physical capabilities that may be depleted by their condition
- Increases overall wellness
- Increases sleep quality
- Increases daily stamina

General Exercise Protocol

- Begin with a gentle stretching program



- Gradually begin a cardiovascular exercise program that is low-impact, such as walking, riding a stationary bike, or water therapy (one should work up to 20-30 minutes daily, 3-4 times a week)
- The cardiovascular exercise programs should include a proper warm-up and cool down
- Begin a strengthening program using lightweights and progressing slowly
- Avoid sustained muscle contractions



- Maintain correct posture
- Chart daily activities and how your body responded in order to appropriately adjust your exercises
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Get in contact with the fitness center for information on starting an exercise program



O&C fitness center 867- 7829
OSB fitness center 861- 3028

- * *Helpful web sites:*
Quackwatch.com
(search Fibromyalgia)
Myalgia.com
Healthy.net/
(search Fibromyalgia)

***RehabWorks**

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